

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 19566 01 OF 02 192026Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /079 W
-----128076 192050Z /63

R 192010Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3523
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY ROME

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 19566

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, FR
SUBJECT: NEGOTIATIONS STILL THE ORDER OF THE DAY

1. SUMMARY: THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMISSIONS OF BOTH FO AND THE CFDT HAVE REAFFIRMED THEIR UNIONS' COMMITMENTS TO NEGOTIATIONS, BUT FO KEEPS LOOKING OVER ITS SHOULDER, WHERE THE CFDT APPEARS TO BE INVOLVED IN SOME KIND OF MANEUVER. END SUMMARY.

2. THIS PAST WEEKEND, THE NATIONAL COMMISSIONS OF BOTH /ORCE OUVRIERE (O) AND THE CFDT MET AND CONFIRMED THEIR TWO UNIONS' SEPARATE, INDEED RIVAL, COMMITMENTS TO CONTINUED NEGOTIATIONS. IN THE CASE OF FO, THE NATIONAL CONFEDERAL COMMISSION'S DISCUSSIONS WERE MARKED BY GENERAL CONCERN OVER THE ABSENCE OF MUCH
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PAGE 02 PARIS 19566 01 OF 02 192026Z

PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS SO FAR, UNEASE OVER THE WAVE OF STIKES THAT HAS MARKED THE RECENT LABOR RELATIONS SCENE (SEE REFS). NONETHELESS, THERE WAS GENERAL CONSENSUS THAT CONTINUED NEGOTIATIONS WERE THE ONLY MEANS OF PROTECTING THE WORKERS' INTERESTS, AND THAT, THEREFORE, THEY WOULD HAVE TO KEEP WORKING AT FINDING BASIS FOR AGREEMENT.

3. ALSO NOTICEABLE AT THE FO JUNE 16-17 MEETING WAS A CURIOUS KIND OF CONCERN: A FEELING THAT THINGS SO FAR HAVE BEEN GOING ALMOST TOO GOOD FOR FO'S OWN GOOD, AND THAT IT MIGHT ALL CHANGE OVERNIGHT. IN ADDITION TO THE NUMEROUS SPEAKERS WHO WARNED OF THE NEED TO CONSOLIDATE THE RECENT ORGANIZATIONAL AND MEMBERSHIP GAINS (IT NOW SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT FO HAS IN FACT PASSED THE CFDT TO BECOME THE COUNTRY'S SECOND LARGEST CONFEDERATION; AND THAT IT IS MAKING SIGNIFICANT NEW INROADS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, TRADITIONALLY ITS WEAKEST AREA), GENERAL SECRETARY BERGERON HIMSELF WARNED THE DELEGATES THAT THE RIVAL CFDT'S DECISION TO REVERT TO BREAD AND BUTTER TRADE UNIONISM WAS A DIRECT RESPONSE TO FO'S PROGRESS. QUOTING FROM THE NOW FAMOUS MOREAU REPORT TO ILLUSTRATE HIS POINT, BERGERON WARNED THAT THIS MEANT THAT O WOULD HAVE TO WORK TWICE AS HARD AS BEFORE TO KEEP ON GROWING.

4. THE CDT PROVIDED THE COUNTERPOINT TO BERGERON'S STATEMENT. IN A JUNE 19 PRESS CONFERENCE, GENERAL SECRETARY MAIRE (WHILE ATTACKING THE POLICIES OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE PRESIDENT, AND THE EMPLOYERS) STATED THAT THE CFDT NATIONAL COUNCIL HAD REAFFIRMED THE UNION'S COMMITMENT TO OBTAINING RESULTS THROUGH NEGOTIATED AGREEMENTS. MAIRE IDENTIFIED WORKING CONDITIONS AS A

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PAGE 03 PARIS 19566 01 OF 02 192026Z

CTIONS (IN UNSPOKEN CONTRAST TO WAGES AND HOURS) AS A PRIME TARGET AREA IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND EVADED PRESS ATTEMPTS TO DRAW HIM OUT ON HIS MARCH COMMENTS TO THE EFFECT THAT HE WOULD GIVE THE GOVERNMENT THREE MONTHS OR SO TO SHOW THAT ITS SOCIAL OVERTURE WAS REAL. MAIRE'S REFUSAL TO CONFIRM THAT HE HAD EVEN MADE SUCH REMARKS, TOGETHER WITH HIS INSISTENCE ON SAYING NOTHING THAT, IN EFFECT, WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE NEW POLICY OF NEGOTIATION WAS UNDER REVIEW, EVENTUALLY PROVOKED A SHARP EXCHANGE OF WORDS BETWEEN HIM AND NOT ONLY SOME OF THE COMMUNIST PRESS PRESENT (WHO WERE OBVIOUSLY SEEKING SOMETHING ON WHICH TO BASE A CLAIM THAT THE CFDT IS GETTING DISCOURAGED WITH THE TEMPO OF THE NEGOTIATIONS) BUT SOME OF THE NEWSMAGAZINE CORRESPONDENTS (WHO WERE EQUALLY OBVIOUSLY ANNOYED AT

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MAIRE'S MANNER). IN THAT TUSSE, MAIRE WON, AND STAYED
WELL OFF THE HOOK.

5. COMMENT: PRIVATELY, THERE IS A FEELING IN SOME
QUARTERS IN FO THAT THERE IS MORE TO THE CFDT'S
PRESENT POSTURE THAN JUST A DESIRE TO COMPETE WITH FO
AS A TRADE UNION, AND TO MAKE UP LOST GROUND. IN THAT
CONNECTION, IT IS CURIOUS THAT ONE PIECE OF INFORMATION
PRODUCED AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE WENT UNNOTED BY THE
JOURNALISTS (AT LEAST NO QUESTIONS WERE ASKED). THIS
WAS MAIRE'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT AT THE 1979 CONGRESS,
THREE MEMBERS OF THE PRESENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WILL
NOT STAND FOR REELECTION: ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
DECAILLON (ORGANIZATIONAL WORK); NATIONAL SECRETARY
RENE SALANNE (INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS), AND JACQUES
MOREAU (POLITICAL AFFAIRS). WHILE BOTH DECAILLON'S
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PAGE 02 PARIS 19566 02 OF 02 192022Z

AND SALANNE'S DEPARTURES HAD BEEN MORE OR LESS
EXPECTED (THEY WILL BOTH STAY ON AS STAFF MEMBERS);
MOREAU'S DEPARTURE IS A SURPRISE. ALTHOUGH HE DID
SAY, WHEN TAKING OFFICE, THAT HE DIDN'T INTEND TO

STAY BEYOND TWO TERMS, IT IS INTERESTING THAT HE
APPARENTLY IS LEAVING THE UNION. WHERE HE GOES, AND
WHAT SIGNIFICANCE, IF ANY, IT MIGHT HAVE AS TO THE
CURRENT BEHIND THE SCENES MANEUVERING WITHIN THE
CFDT WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF A SEPARATE REPORT.
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